

SECRET HISTORY OF M E A D I L L A.

CONTAINING

A Faithful Account of her BIRTH and
PARENTAGE; her AMOUR with a Gentleman in
Ireland, and the several remarkable Passages that
occurr'd to her in her Way from thence to *London*:
Her Behaviour and Conduct for the last four Years:
With her Views in frequenting the COURT.

Together with the whole Series of

Her AMOUR with COUNT ONSLORIO,
and Their *Extraordinary* NUPTIALS.

Also the several CIRCUMSTANCES attending the same, and
Genuine COPIES of several LETTERS

Particularly,

The First which Count ONSLORIO sent to her, on his
seeing her at COURT, wherein he begg'd her to accept his
Address, which he assured her was HONOURABLE.

With MEADILLA's ANSWER.

And another LETTER she sent him, on his absconding with her
after CONSUMMATION.

With the PROCEEDINGS

As they are going on in the ECCLESIASTICAL COURT
on the Behalf of MEADILLA, for CONFINEMENT.

The Whole concluded, with a PARALLEL

Between the Cases of Count ONSLORIO and MEADILLA
the Ld. FITZMAURICE and Mrs. BEIL LESSON.

L O N D O N :

Printed for T. RAYNES, near the *Swain's Tavern* in the Strand.

[Price One Shilling.]

SECRET HISTORY

M E A D Y L L A

CONTAINING

A Faithful Account of her Birth and
Parentage; her Amour with a Gentleman in
Jewell, and the several remarkable Passages that
occurred to her in her Youth, from her first
Education to her Marriage; and her Behaviour and
Conduct from her Marriage to her Death.

Her Amour with a Gentleman in Jewell
and her Marriage with a Gentleman in Jewell
Also the several Passages that occurred to her
from her first Education to her Marriage, and
her Behaviour and Conduct from her Marriage to her Death.



The first Part of the History contains
the Birth and Parentage of the Heroine, and
the several remarkable Passages that occurred
to her in her Youth, from her first Education
to her Marriage; and her Behaviour and
Conduct from her Marriage to her Death.

With the PART SECOND
As they are going on in the second Part
of the History, the several remarkable Passages
that occurred to her in her Youth, from her
first Education to her Marriage; and her
Behaviour and Conduct from her Marriage to her
Death.

L O N D O N
Printed for T. Roper, at the Theatre Royal, in
St. James's Street, 1711.



TO THE

VIRTUOUS VANELLA.

MADAM,

IF the sage Gentlemen of the COLLEGE allow Custom to be a good Plea, then certainly *Intrigue*, which is very near as old as the World, may be justify'd; having the Sanction of innumerable Precedents on her Side, and of greater Antiquity than any that can be produced. For what Reason, therefore, do the PRUDES, with their external and formal Air of Gravity, exclaim and condemn it, and stigmatize it with the Epithets, *vicious*, and *libidinous*, when at the same Time they themselves are guilty, and daily perpetrate what they condemn in Others? For my own Part, I must frankly declare, I can assign no other Reason than an insatiable Desire of engrossing All to themselves, by which I am of Opinion they incur the Penalties

iv DEDICATION.

in the Statute made and provided against Monopolies, and therefore ought to suffer accordingly. I challenge the most hypocritical among them all to shew the least Shadow of Pretence for preventing other Females from having a Fellow-feeling with them. Unconscionable Women! they are more avaritious than the most sordid Misers, or even those Gentlemen in Black, who, tho' they have ten or a Dozen fat Benefices, suffer their Hearts to pant after more.

But your Virtue, Madam, will not permit You to be number'd in the Class of such greedy Women, it screens your Character in that Particular, and You are not so uncharitable as to deny your Neighbours the Fruition of what is natural to Flesh and Blood. In this Point You are highly to be applauded; for, as Experience has taught You that Coition is the most intense Pleasure on this Side of the Grave, You are not so rapacious as to take it ALL to Yourself, but are willing that your Sex might communicate, and do Good in their Generation.

And here, Madam, I take the Opportunity of condoling with You on the Loss of your last Child; who, if the Fates had spared her Life, would, without Doubt, have inherited her Mother's shining Virtues, and have trod in the Paths that should be set before her. But, alas! she is now no more! and Death has deprived the World of their Expectation, and

DEDICATION.

and thereby foreclosed their Hopes of seeing such a pretty little *Miss*, who might one Day have rival'd her Mother in all her Virtuous Actions. However, they have this Comfort, that, as You have Youth on your Side, and are determin'd not to lose your Teeming-Time, You will increase and multiply, and crown their Desire.

It is now Time to intreat You, Madam, to take the following **SECRET HISTORY** under your Protection; *Meadilla* is a pretty Lady, and tho' it may possibly happen that she may one Day become your Rival; yet let me not suffer on that Account: 'Tis said Men and Women love Variety: But give me Leave to assure You, that a Woman's Constancy is an infallible Way to secure to herself the Heart of her Lover.

I must say one Thing, not in the Justification, but in Alleviation of the Charge against our Sex, that *Man* had never stray'd, if Mother *Eve*, by her *Back-sliding*, had not entail'd that Curse on all her Posterity; from whence I conclude, that the *Falling-Sickness* was the first Distemper that reign'd in the World.

New Bond-Street is a Burrow as remarkable for pretty *Bunnies*, as was *Whetstone's Park* of ancient Memory, or the Hundred of *Drury* is at this Day; and if the *Keepers* inform me right, some have made

made a new Warren by Grosvenor-Square; for there, they say, is the best Pasture: But I forget to what a Length I have stretch'd my DEDICATION, I shall, therefore, cut it short, by assuring You, that I am,

M A D A M,

A Well-Wisher to the Mathematicks,

and Your Humble Servant.



THE
SECRET HISTORY
OF
MEADILLA.

THE bare Mention of *Secret History* has something in it very unaccountable; it seldom or never fails of meeting with Success in the World, and I know no other Reason that can be assigned for it, than the Curiosity and eager Desire of People in every Rank and Station who expect to discover something therein to please their Humour, or increase their Spleen, which would otherwise have been buried in Oblivion. Some, out of Envy, hope to find Plenty of Scandal, that they may have an Opportunity of throwing Dirt at the envied Party, or to wipe away the Spots of their own Character, by sullyng the Reputation of another; and

there are some again, who, not addicted to such a malicious Temper, expect to glean Matter enough out of *Secret History* to administer *Chit Chat* to supply the barren Thoughts and Inventions of the Men, or furnish the Women with *Tittle Tattle* at their Tea-Tables, where you may hear *Scandal* in Abundance, which always gives a double Relish to their Liquor, and renders it more palatable.

These Histories have generally (what the Booksellers call) a *good Run*; and though some of them are soon out of *Breath*, yet they are sure to *win the Plate*: I could support this Assertion by quoting many Examples, but, for the sake of Brevity, I shall only mention two; viz. *The Secret History of the WHITE-STAFF* in the last Reign but one, and *the Secret History of VANELLA* in the present. There is *Magick*, methinks, in that single Word *SECRET*; for, as soon as it reaches our Ears, it diffuses it self through every Part, and in a Moment excites in us an irresistible Inclination of knowing what it imports. But notwithstanding, that *Secret History* has such a wonderful Power, yet I will be bold to affirm, there is something else with the Epithet *Secret* prefix'd to it, that exceeds it by many Degrees; for it affects in an Instant all the Faculties both of Soul and Body: I mean *SECRET SERVICE*. And might I be indulg'd the Liberty of publishing *Secret Services*, I should have the Satisfaction of pleasing the World, and find my own Account in it. These Things being premised, I shall now hasten to the Subject-Matter in Hand, namely, *The Secret History of MENDIP*.

This Gentlewoman was born in the County of *Cork*, in the Province of *Munster*, which has more Quality and Gentry in it than the three other Provinces of the Kingdom of *Ireland*: She is descended from a very ancient and reputable Family, and as the People of *Munster* take a Pride in giving their Children the best Education, so *Meadilla's* Parents took Care to have her instructed, and brought up in the handsomest Manner at Home, and afterwards committed her to the Care of a Gentlewoman, who kept a Boarding-School, for her further Improvement.

She continued there for some Years, but her Wit and Beauty encreasing, she attracted the Eyes, and conquer'd the Hearts of several young Gentlemen, each of them thinking himself happy, if she did but vouchsafe to favour him with a Smile. There was one among the rest who obtained her good Graces, and they sometimes found an Opportunity to spend a few Hours in Courtship; and during the Intervals they held a Correspondence by Writing to each other. However, this Affair was not conducted with so much Secrecy as to escape the Knowledge of her Parents; who knowing that the Gentleman was Heir to a very large Estate, and being conscious that they could not give her a suitable Fortune without injuring their other Children, adjudged it proper to take her Home. A more particular Account of her Parentage will be found hereafter, as she related it to the Count of *Hunflorio*. But, before this was accomplished, it reach'd the Ears of the Lovers, who professing mutual Love for each other, concluded to carry on a fair Understanding by Letters.

Meadilla

Meadilla was brought to her Father's House, and a Watch set over her; but alas! if *Argus* himself had guarded her, Gold would have blinded his hundred Eyes. There is something so tempting in that Metal, that it cannot be resisted; and truly, if Persons of the highest Rank are corrupted with it, we may reasonably expect that those of the inferiour Sort will be deluded by it; and among these is to be numbered the Woman who was set as a Spy over *Meadilla*. By the help of this All-bewitching Gold, the Lovers often, but innocently solaced themselves in each other's Arms, particularly when her Parents were not at home.

But now the Catastrophe of their Amours draws on. The young Gentleman's Father propos'd a Match between his Son and the Daughter of a Gentleman, who was to give a Portion adequate to the Jointure that should be settled upon her: This was quickly agreed upon, and a Day was appointed for an Interview between the young Couple. As soon as the young Gentleman was acquainted with the Proposal, so great was his Surprise, that he swoon'd in an Instant; and when he had recover'd his Senses, supplicated his Father in the most moving Posture, not to lay such Commands upon him; for his Compliance would soon put a Period to his Life. The Answer his Father made, was to advise him to reflect with himself for two or three Days, and then he withdrew. As soon as the Lover had composed his Mind, he dispatch'd a Letter to *Meadilla*, which was convey'd to her by the Hands of her Governante; but, oh! what Words can express the Grief of her Soul when she read the Contents? How

much was her beautiful Countenance changed in a Minute? A languid Paleness that manifested the Sorrow and Affliction of her Heart, and an usual flushing, that indicated the Vexation of her Mind, alternately took Place at length, calming the Perturbation of her Breast, she returned a pathetick Answer, exhorting, and conjuring him to remember, and not violate upon any Account whatever the sacred Vows and Protestations he had made, which were ratified in Heaven; and at the same time imploring him to write to her again without delay.

This Letter was intercepted by the young Gentleman's Father, who being thereby convinced to what a Length his Son had proceeded without his Privy or Consent, determined to put a Stop to his Courtship for the future: To effect this, he took him abroad in his Coach the next Day, under a Pretence of visiting a Friend, and they arrived at the Gentleman's House, whose Daughter was design'd for the other's Son. Here they tarried for the Space of a Fortnight, in which time the Thoughts of *Meadilla* were erased from his Memory; and now the young Lady reigned sole Monarch of his Heart. The Parents finding that there was now a fair Prospect of crowning their Hopes with Success, would not let such an Opportunity slip away; and therefore concluded to hasten the Wedding, which was celebrated in a few Days.

When this unwelcome News was brought to *Meadilla*, she raved like a *Bethlemite*, she ran up and down the House, from one Room to another, as if she had
C been

been distracted; her Parents endeavoured to pacify her, but, alas! her Passion had got the Ascendant over her Reason, and not having that Regard, which she otherwise would have had, to her filial Duty, she inveighed most bitterly against her Parents, telling them that they were the Occasion of her Ruin, and that the Judgment of Heaven would light upon 'em. Some People, perhaps, may be apt to think that, by the Sequel of this Story, she spoke prophetically; but I would advise them to banish from their Minds, and not entertain such superstitious Thoughts. That Night *Meadilla* was seized with a violent Fever, which increasing the next Day, Physicians were called in, who said, That by all the Symptoms they could discover, there were small (if any) Hopes of her Recovery; and tho' they prescribed several Things for her, yet she would not take one, nor did she suffer any Food to be put into her Mouth for four Days. At last her Fever abated, but her continual Grief flung her into the *Yellow Jaundice*, which hung upon her for some Years, and spoil'd the Beauty of her Complexion.

In a few Days after her Recovery from the Fever, the Small-Pox raged in the Family, and made such Ravock, that it swept away her Mother, and her Brethren and Sisters; which affected her Father in such a Manner that he did not long survive it. Having but one Child left he made her his sole Executrix, whereby she became possessed of a moderate Estate, and about Five Thousand Pounds in Cash, with

with good Securities, which produced Eight *per Cent.*

By this Time she had worn out the Thoughts of her first Lover, whose Perfidiousness met with a just Punishment. His Wife, who was one of the sweetest temper'd Creatures in the World, grew ill-natur'd, fowre, and morose; infomuch that he was tired of Life: She continually thwarted him in every Thing, and made him so uneasy, that (having no Children) he determin'd to leave her. In Hopes, therefore, of making himself happy, he writ a Letter to *Meadilla*, asking a Thousand Pardons for the Injury he had done her, and intreated in the most humble and pressing Manner, to admit him to speak to her; she refused to receive the Letter, but by Way of Answer, advised him to read Mr. *Congreve's* Tragedy, call'd the *Mourning Bride*, where he would find the following Verse:

*Heav'n hath no Rage like Love to Hatred turn'd
Nor Hell a Fury like a Woman scorn'd.*

Tho' this Answer pierced his very Soul, yet he resolv'd to declare his Mind to her, and having disguised himself, went to her House, and taking upon him a feigned Name, gained Admittance. *Meadilla* soon discover'd him, but kept the Secret from him; and then he had the Audaciousness to make a Proposal, in his own Name, of their retiring out of the Kingdom, and cohabiting in some Part of *England*, where,

where they might not be discover'd. To this she answer'd, with a Countenance that manifested her Indignation; *Sir, the barbarous Treatment I have met from the Gentleman, who deputed you to come hither, I forgive; but his consummate Impudence in endeavouring to attack my Virtue, is what merits Correction. As to the former, he has met with a Reward due to his Demerit; but I hope Heaven will as easily forgive the Violation of his Oaths as I have done, and all his past Sufferings are of no Weight, if put into Balance with what I have endured upon his Account. I have nothing to say further, than I will not be so uncivil to turn you out of my House; nor will you, I am apt to think, be so rude, as to keep me here contrary to my Inclination.*

Having thus spoken she withdrew; and the Gentleman retired, reflecting upon what had been said to him. *Meadilla*, to avoid future Visits and Importunities, which he might have the Assurance to make, committed the Care of her Estate to a neighbouring Gentleman, whom she made her Steward, and invested him with full Power to manage every Thing for her; and then, having put her Affairs in Order, she began her Journey to *Dublin*.

She did not continue long in that City before she embarked for *England*, hoping that a Woman of her good Sense, Education, and polite Behaviour, might recommend her to some Gentleman, whose Estate, joined with her's, might enable them to live decently.

decently, maintain their Family with Credit, and by their prudent Oeconomy make an handsome Provision for their Children. When she came to *London*, Lodgings were hired for her in *Madox-Street*, where she resided for some Time; she afterwards went to a Sadler's in *New Bond-Street*, and from thence to the House where she now lodges in the same Street. Knowing that her Fortune was but slender, she lived very retired, having only one Maid to attend her; she went frequently to Court, but did not visit any Person, or receive any, except from her own Relations. And by this prudent Management she preserved her Reputation from the Scandal that the censorious and prying Part of the World might be apt to bespatter it with, had she admitted any of the spruce *Toupees* of the Town to pay their Devoirs to her, many having a great Inclination to get into her good Graces.

Count *Onslow* having often seen this young Lady at Court, made the strictest Enquiry to know who she was, but all to no Purpose; she had often made his Mouth water, but he could not readily devise how to insinuate himself into her Company. At last he order'd one of his Footmen to dog her, and as soon as she went into her Chair, the Fellow follow'd it, and seeing her enter the House where she lodg'd, enquired who she was, and what was her Name? was inform'd that she was a Native of *Ireland*, had lodg'd in that Street, and another pretty near it for four Years, or thereabouts; that she liv'd

in Credit, had an Estate, always went out in a Chair, but admitted No-body but her Relations and particular Friends and Acquaintance to come to see her.

The Footman having received this Information, returned to the Count, who was very well pleased with the News that he had brought, and began to contrive how he could be introduced to her; a thousand Ways occur'd to him, but there was not one that had the Probability of Success: At last a lucky Thought came into his Head, which crown'd his Hopes. He called the Footman, whom he had sent on his Errand before, and bid him watch till she went abroad, and then return to him with all the Speed imaginable; the Servant put his Master's Orders in Execution, and procuring an Acquaintance to accompany him, (without imparting any-thing of the Matter to him) went to an Alehouse, almost opposite to *Meadilla's*, and placed himself at a Window, where he could have a full View of every one who went in, or came out. When he had late there near an Hour, he saw an empty Chair brought to the Door, in which the Lady had been carry'd to the *Park*; hereupon he discharged his Reckoning, and went home with all the Speed imaginable to give an Account to his Lord.

The Count ordered his Chariot to be got ready immediately, and order'd the Footman to direct the Coachman to the young Lady's Lodgings; he then alighted, and enquiring if *Meadilla* was at home? The Gentlewoman of the Shop answered, *She was not.*

not. He then desired to speak a Word with the Mistress of the House, who conducting him into the Parlour, he sat down by her, and then begun to make the following Speech; *Madam, I have often seen the beautiful Meadilla at Court, but never could have the Happiness of being introduced into her Company; I must ingenuously confess she is Mistress of Count Onslorio's Heart: If she be not pre-engaged to any other Person, I would willingly make my Addreses to her upon Honourable Terms. I say Honourable, for, upon my HONOUR, I have no other View than to make her my Wife.* My Lord, answered the Gentlewoman of the House, *I know nothing of any Pre-engagement, the Lady is the best Person to resolve that Question; this I must say for her, I have not seen any Thing in her Behaviour that cou'd give the least Suspicion of doubting her Modesty, and if Your Lordship pleases, I will communicate to her what you have said. I shall take it as a great Favour, (reply'd the Count) and Tomorrow, with her Permission, will pay my Respects to her.* Upon this, His Lordship took his Leave, and as soon as Meadilla return'd, she was made acquainted with what His Lordship had said. What to do in so critical a Point she could not tell, and having consulted with the Gentlewoman of the House, she consented to admit the Count, and hear what he had to propose. The next Morning the following Letter was brought to the Lady by the Count's Servant.

To the Charming MEADILLA.

TO see You is Pleasure, to converse with You is Happiness; but what must it be to embrace such an Angelick Creature! If Beauty, Wit, good Sense, a sound Judgment, and a bright Genius, are deem'd the most precious Jewels, how richly are You embellish'd! It is, therefore, no Wonder that You are courted by the Noblest Personages. Sure, Nature was doubly diligent in the Formation of You, since we see in You more Perfection than can be found in the rest of Your Sex. I shall be proud of paying my most humble Devotions to You, and make a Tender of my Love and Affection; to which End, I humbly petition for Admittance, that I may confirm by Word of Mouth what I have now given You under my Hand: And give me Leave to assure You, upon my Honour, that there is not one among the Multitude of Your Admirers, who can boast a Passion for You with so much Sincerity, as the

P. S. Your ANSWER, most Dear Lady, shall be acknowledged as a singular Mark of Your Favour.

Faithful ONSLORIO.

Meadilla, who was not a Stranger to the Person of the Count Onslorio, scrutinized every Word of the Letter; and tho' she perceived each Sentence was strained and affected, yet, hoping to be made a Peeress, she granted his Request, and sent him the following Answer.

MEADILLA to Count ONSLORIO.

I Have had the Honour of Your Lordship's Letter, and I wish I could prevail with myself to believe that what Your Hand has impos'd was the Dictates of Your Heart as well as Your Head; but You have play'd the Courtier in such an ample Manner, that You will forgive my Incredulity, if I tell You that I cannot persuade myself You are sincere, and design to act upon Honourable Terms. Your Extraordinary Compliments are too pregnant with Fulsome Flattery,

very, and as I am conscious that I do not merit them, I am not so vain to appropriate them to me. I can easily distinguish Truth from Stratagem, tho' varnish'd with the most specious Gloss. Gold will stand the Test, but gilt Metal will not bear the touchstone. I will not debar myself from the Pleasure of Your Lordship's Conversation, which, if adequate to the Tenour of Your Letter in general, must needs be very polite, and then I shall discover the Reality or Insincerity of that Love and Affection that You profess to have for me. Men spread a thousand Nets to ensnare an unwary Woman, and with Grief of Heart I say I am sorry any have been so heedless as to be catch'd in them. For my own Part, I will use all the Circumspection imaginable, and not approach the Lure, be it ever so enticing. But I forget I begin to be prolix, and therefore, to atone for my Offence, I must break off abruptly, but decorely subscribe myself

Your Lordship's Humble Servant,

MEADILLA.

Nothing could be more obvious than the Purport of this Answer, the Orthography was conspicuous, and the Hand-Writing plain and legible; yet the Count spent as much Time in deciphering it as if it had been in Characters that wanted a Key to render them intelligible. At last he rose up in an exulting a Manner, as if he had found out a Golden Mine, and cry'd out with Joy, She's my own! She's my own! for, Virtue that parleys, will quickly surrender. Behold, the Charming Meadilla tells me that she will not debar herself from the Pleasure of my Conversation, which must needs be very polite. — Is not this a plain Demonstration that she loves me? Poor Creature! She who loves a Man will not refuse him any Thing he can ask; and her calling my Conversation polite, is a strong Argument of her good Sense and sound Judgment.

In the Afternoon Count Onflorio came in his Chariot to Meadilla, who received him in her Apartment with all the Decorum agreeable to a Person of his Rank. He said, his first Question was, she would be pleased to inform him if she was engaged to any other Person? To which she answered in the

Negative. He then told her, as he admired her above all the Ladies *his Eyes ever beheld*, he requested he might be receiv'd as a Suitor upon the HONOURABLE Terms of MARRIAGE. To this *Meadilla* answered, " My Lord, You do me more Honour than I ever imagin'd, for my Ambition does not soar so high; but I think it incumbent upon me to acquaint Your Lordship, that my Fortune is small, no more than with good Frugality to support myself with Credit, and keep one Servant, having no more than Eighty Pounds *per Annum*, tho' my Grandfather had Seven Thousand Pounds annually, but having a numerous Issue, and my Father being the youngest Son, he could not make a large Provision for him, and therefore he qualify'd himself, and enter'd in Holy Orders. This is the whole Truth, and I would not impose upon any Gentleman, if I might be made a Duchess."

Madam, (reply'd the Count) your candid and generous Declaration has given me double Satisfaction, believe me, dear Lady, I would sooner chuse One without a Fortune, who is frugal, than One who has ever so much Money, and expects to expend it in Extravagance. The former, with her prudent Management, will save a Fortune, while the other is spending one in Plays, Opera's, Assemblies, Masquerades, and Gaming: Vices, which are now become so fashionable among Persons of Quality, that she, who does not follow that Mode, is look'd upon as one who has no Taste or Relish of the World. But You, with your *small* Fortune, Madam, as You are pleased to call It, shall be as kindly treated, and with as much Respect by me, if You were the greatest Heiress in the Kingdom.

Meadilla returned His Lordship a thousand Thanks for his good Offers, and asked His Lordship to drink a Dish of Tea, which he readily accepted.

They talk'd of several Things promiscuously, but the Count's Discourse ran principally upon Love; and the Lady being naturally of a pleasant Temper, gave him now and then a sparkling Stroke, which he could neither avoid nor return. He easily perceiv'd she had too much Sense for him to encounter with, and was Mistress of so much Wit and Repartee, which she us'd with Decency and good Manners, that he did not think

think it proper to engage in either of them. In the Evening he took his Leave, and said, he hoped he might, for the future, have the Honour of Admittance. *Yes, my Lord, (answer'd Meadilla) when You please, provided You keep to Your Honour.*

When His Lordship was gone, the Landlady came up, and smiling said, *Madam, shall I wish Your Ladyship Joy? ——— WHO WAITS THERE? MY LADY ONSLORIO'S CHARIOT. ——— MAKE WAY FOR HER LADYSHIP. ——— Methinks, Madam, I see all this before me. You are very merry, (answered Meadilla) but how would You look, do You think, when You awake, and find it a Delusion, a meer fanciful Dream? Well, Madam, (reply'd the Mistress of the House) tho' it is not so, I hope it will be in a little Time.* Thus they spent the Time till Night; and we shall leave them together, and proceed to the Sequel of the History.

When the Count came home he began to ruminate upon what had pass'd; the fair Image of *Meadilla* made such a deep Impression on his Mind, that she seem'd to be placed before him: She had taken Possession of his Heart, and there was no Possibility of ejecting her from thence, even tho' he might have endeavour'd to effect it. He then began to reflect with himself upon Love; and to conclude that Man has by Nature imprinted in his Soul an affected Desire or earnest Inclination to something that is fair and good; and finds nothing so apt to be the Center of his Affections, and to correspond with his Nature as *Woman*. Now as Man was created, and an Help given him to *increase and multiply*, he could not continue without *Generation*, which could not be unless he was join'd to a *Woman*; so far Love may be called pure and innocent: But when his Affections are irregular and extreme, when they transgress the Bounds of Virtue, they are then, in the truest Sense, nothing less than Incentives that carry away his Mind with Impetuosity to gratify a libidinous Desire, and this is what we vulgarly call *Last*. Now it is worth Observation, that the Count made *Honourable Love* the Basis or Ground-work of his being introduced to *Meadilla*, which he declar'd the Evening preceding his first Visit, and confirm'd it the next Day

to the young Lady. I shall, therefore, submit it to the Opinion of every impartial Reader, and not take upon me to be Judge in this Case, whether, by the ensuing Part of the History, the Count has, or has not, violated his Honour; and whether the Love, which he professed, may be term'd *pure and sincere*, or *vicious and hypocritical*.

The Count repeated his Visit, and continued so to do for the Space of Twelve Months, or upwards, and was always received in the handsomest and most modest Manner, for *Meadilla* never gave him the least Umbrage to censure her Chastity, or her Behaviour, her Deportment being always such as became a Gentlewoman, whom the Count intended to honour with his titular Name. But I should have observed, that, during the Courtship, he advised the Lady to increase her Equipage, telling her, That People might think it a Disgrace to her, and reflect upon her for being penurious in keeping one Servant, whom he design'd to make his Wife; whereupon *Meadilla* hired a second Woman to dress and wait upon her, and a Man-Servant to attend her when she went abroad, or to wait at Table, whom she provided with a genteel Livery, and the better to cover his Intentions, he hired the Man of the House to be his Cook. at Fifty Pounds a Year, who had always been bred up in Noblemen's Families in that Capacity.

Not one Day pass'd in which the Count did not either visit *Meadilla*, or send a Servant with a *How do you?* But so much Time being elaps'd, and his Lordship continuing his Visits daily, gave some malicious People a Pretence to question his Honour, and sully the Reputation of the young Lady. When the Mistress of the House hear'd this it gave her some Surprize, tho' she was conscious there was no Room for such an Odium to be cast on *Meadilla's* Character. However, she judg'd it necessary to acquaint her with it, and taking a proper Opportunity, she spoke to her to this Effect. "Madam, "I am persuaded you will not think me officious in communicating to you a Matter of great Importance; no less "a Matter, I assure you, than what relates to your Virtue. "Twelve Months are pass'd since the Count made his Ad- "dresses

"dresses to you upon *Honourable* Terms, as he was pleased to
 "call them; but, as he has not thought fit to espouse you,
 "the World begins to censure your Conduct; and tho' I am
 "fully satisfy'd there is no Foundation for the Report, yet
 "People do not scruple to say that you have imprudently
 "sacrificed to him what every Woman ought to esteem as
 "precious as her Life, I mean your *Chastity*: And forgive
 "me if I tell you, that you are now become a *Town Talk*.
 "You best know what Step you ought to take in Order to
 "justify yourself, and stop the malicious Tongues of the People,
 "by vindicating your Reputation; I have done what lyes in
 "my Power, and wish it had the desired Effect, and in my
 "humble Opinion, the only Remedy now left is to put the
 "Question to the Count, if he does design to marry you,
 "and if his Answer shall be in the Affirmative, then to in-
 "sist upon his nominating the Day."

This Piece of sudden News struck *Meadilla* with the greatest
 Surprise; as she knew her own Innocence, she could not
 hide her Indignation, which was visible in her Countenance:
 At last, arming herself with Fortitude, she thus spoke;

"It is impossible to obviate the Malice of some People,
 "and if I was sensible that I had given any just Cause ei-
 "ther by Thought, Word, or Action, to sully my Character,
 "or charge me with a Breach of my Virtue, I should look
 "upon myself as the most impudent of Women to pretend
 "to justify myself: But, as I have hitherto preserved my
 "Chastity and Integrity, my firm and fix'd Resolution is,
 "that I will not do any Thing whereof my Conscience shall
 "accuse me. ----- I thank you, Madam, for imparting to
 "me, in such a seasonable Time, the Report of the Town,
 "and the good Advice you have so friendly given me, which,
 "believe me, I should have pursued of my own Accord;
 "and since it is my hard Lot to fall under the Censure of
 "the World, I must bear it with Patience. I must acknow-
 "ledge myself guilty of Imprudence in permitting the Count
 "to visit me so often, and not asking him to declare with
 "*Sincerity* what his Intentions are; the only Refuge I now
 "have

“ have is to demand a positive Answer to the Question I shall
 “ put to him of the same Nature with what you propos’d;
 “ and if it shall be in the Negative, I shall then break off in
 “ the handsomest Manner, and desire he will not only forbear
 “ his Visits for the future, but refrain from speaking to me,
 “ if we should ever happen to meet, or be in Company.

It must needs be expected that *Meadilla* fretted when alone, and was heartily vex’d, when she reflected upon the Rumour of her having been defiled; for, Accusations of such a vile and heinous Nature, when brought against Innocent Persons, gives them double Inquietude, and touches their very Souls.

Before she could entirely compose her troubled Mind, Count *Onsorio* came to pay her a Visit; he plainly saw the Disorder she was in, and taking her by the Hand, told her many soft and tender Things, which would have been more suitable from a Person less advanc’d in Years, requesting to know the Cause of her Grief. *Meadilla*, rising from her Chair, said,

My Lord, You have courted me above a Year, remember your Proposal was to make me your Lady, but you have not mention’d any Thing tending that Way any further than your Repetitions of Love, which you daily profess’d. It is with the greatest Grief and Trouble of Mind I now tell you I have lost my good Name, my Fame is spotted, and my Reputation fully’d, tho’ very unjustly; but you are the Cause of all these: And People will not believe I am chaste, giving out you have seduc’d me. Thus I suffer in the most Tender Part upon your Account, and so you are the only Person who ought, and can make me Reparation. I therefore insist upon your positive Answer, Whether you will marry me, or not? For I will not be trifled with any longer.

Never was Man in such Confusion, her Words were like so many Thunder-bolts, and it was some Time before he could utter a Syllable. He often bit his Lips, turn’d pale, and it was very easy to discover the Uneasiness he was in: At last, reddening with Anger, he reply’d,

Madam,

Madam, I am very sorry for what has happen'd, but who can avoid Reproaches and Delamation, when the Tongues of wicked People are so licentious? And I appeal to your own Conscience, whether I ever spoke, or offer'd any Rudeness to you, capable of contributing to the Rise of such a Report; and therefore, Madam, — Forbear, my Lord, a little, *said Meadilla*, and do not begin to play the *Sophister*; you are going to evade the Question by Circumlocution of what is not material to the Question. You say you appeal to my Conscience, whether, by Word or Deed, you ever offer'd any Rudeness to me? My Conscience excuses you in that Particular, but at the same Time dictates to me you ought to do Justice. Had I seen any Rude Behaviour in you, I would not have admitted you afterwards; and as I now appeal to your own Conscience, whether you did not request me to suffer you to make your Addresses to me upon Honourable Terms, which I can prove not only by your own Letter, but by living Witnesses; so I expect you will give me a peremptory and catagorical Answer.

His Lordship, having paused a little, answer'd with a supercilious Air, I suppose it will content you, if my Postilion marry'd us? To which *Meadilla* answer'd, I know not your Postilion; but if he should perform the Ceremony in a Parson's Habit, I should think it lawful; nor would it be my Business to require him to produce his TESTIMONIAL, to prove himself legally ordain'd. Therefore, my Lord, once for all, I demand your Answer. Why then, *said he*, as we cannot readily obtain a LICENCE, I am willing to marry you now, and let each of us take a PRAYER-BOOK, and repeat the CEREMONY. I am contented, *reply'd MEADILLA*.

She then brought her Book, and presenting it to the Count, went to borrow another; but before she return'd she acquainted the Gentlewoman of the House with the whole Matter, and got two Witnesses ready, who saw, and heard the Count read the Man's Part, and *Meadilla* hers.

The Bride's Heart was now at Rest, and the Thoughts of enjoying such a Beautiful fine Virgin might possibly divert the Count from reflecting on what has since given him much Uneasiness; or probably might imagine the Marriage was not binding in Law, and so indulged himself in forbidden Pleasures without Controul. Be that as it will, a Supper was prepar'd, and very merry they were, he, perhaps, thinking he had chous'd the Lady, and she in the same Manner diverted, in outwitting him, and obtaining the Satisfaction he desir'd.

The Nuptial Bed was prepar'd, and after Supper, the Bride retir'd thither; you may reasonably conclude, that an impatient Lover, for some Men between fifty and sixty Years of Age are as eager as others between twenty and thirty, for, as soon as Word was brought the Lady was ready to receive him, he immediately follow'd. Here we shall draw the Curtain, and leave 'em.

The Chariot was order'd Home, and the Footman not to return till sent for. — Certainly the Count must have been extremely enamour'd with his Lady; for they did not rise for the Space of two Nights and a Day; so there was Opportunity sufficient to prove they were bedded. When he ascended a Chair was call'd, and promising to return quickly, was carry'd to his own House.

Whether the Count was fully sated with his Love-Encounters, and that no Prosecution could be commenc'd against him; or whether he repented his Hasty Marriage, and upon mature Consideration, began to apprehend, if he cohabited with *Meadilla*, it might seem to ratify and confirm the Nuptials in the Eye of the World, I shall not take upon me to determine: It is certain he has refrain'd her Company ever since, and not seeing, or hearing from him in three Days, gave Birth to the following LETTER.

To

To the Right Honourable the Lord ONLOW

My Honour'd Lord,

WHEN I last saw Your Lordship, You promis'd at Your Departure that You would return before Night; and this You declar'd upon Your HONOUR. I would not go to Bed, in Expectation of Your Coming; but, as three Days are now elapsed, and I have not had one Visit, or a Line from You, I thought myself oblig'd to write this Letter. I appeal to Yourself, whether You have not forfeit'd Your HONOUR; and I wish the World may forgive it as easily as I do; it would have been kind, if You had let me know what I have done to occasion this Separation on Your Part; can You charge me with any other Fault than my Credulity, which occasion'd my fond Heart to trust to Your Affections? Did You not find me a Virgin pure and undefiled, when I receiv'd Your Embraces? Why then do you treat me in such a cold and forsaken Manner? You said You was pleas'd with the Banquet, and I think I may affirm you was, otherwise You would not have sat to it near forty Hours. Come, my dear Lord, return to my Arms, and find a kind Reception there; if You know the Trouble and great Anxiety of Mind which your Absence gives me, you would at least send me a Line to comfort me, and dispel these Clouds of Grief that surround me. I could never have believ'd it possible for my dear LORD to use me ill; but, what You have now convinc'd me that all Things are possible. If You design Grief, Infamy and Solitude will be my Lot: Remember, that if I have conceiv'd, and it shall please Heaven, that I shall forth a Child, what less than Want can be his Portion? Meditate the Thoughts of such a poor unhappy Infant, deserv'd from a Father, and, as You are the Father, should rather move you to Compassion, and increase your Tenderness; but let my Fate what it will, let me hear it from your own Mouth this Evening, or let it come from your Hand, that I may be assur'd what I have to trust to from

Once more I invite you to my Arms, and I wish, for your
Sake, as well as mine, that I could persuade you to com-
mune with me: Obedient and sincere Desire of her, who is no more
MEADILLA, but

Lady ONSLORIO.

The Count had no Regard to this Letter, and the Noise
of this Extraordinary Marriage reaching some certain Persons
near, who were Friends to *Meadilla*, they went next Morn-
ing to the Count's, and ask'd the Porter, if the Lady *Onslorio*
was stirring? He answer'd, that he knew no Lady the Count
had: Indeed, indeed, reply'd the People, he is married to
Meadilla in *New Bond-Street*. The Fellow acquainted his
Lord with what had happened, as soon as he came down
stairs, who in a Passion charged the Porter to send for a
Constable if they came a second Time, swearing, that he
would have them all committed to Goal. Afterwards he dis-
miss'd his Cook, who, as I before observ'd, was the Landlord
of the House wherein *Meadilla* lodg'd, and where the Cere-
mony was perform'd, and very GENEROUSLY gave him but
two Guineas for all his Bargain.

Meadilla, (for so, I shall call her till the Tryal be over)
sent a Messenger with a Letter to Dr. *Henselman*, a Civilian in
the Commons, who not knowing the Lady, requir'd of the Por-
ter to tell him the Affair, but the Fellow not being acquainted
with the Contents of the Letter, told him he could not, how-
ever the Doctor said he would be at the Lady's Lodgings im-
mediately, and so he was.

When Dr. *Henselman* had heard the Circumstances of the
whole Affair, he gave in his Opinion, that *Meadilla's* Cause
was just, and advis'd her to empower him to be her Advo-
cate in the Commons, and give Orders for citing the Count
in the Ecclesiastical Court for his Appearance to answer to her
for *Conventual Breach*, all which the Lady agreed to,
and accordingly going on accordingly.

The County, on finding the Affair, was talk'd of to the Court, retired to his Country Seat, but before he was in Town, made Overtures to *Miadilla*, and offered her Ten Thousands of Pounds to quit him of the Contract, but she insists on the just Thing, and will not sell the Title of Ladyship unless the Law obliges her against her Consent.

I ought to have observed that an Old Woman, who had the Phiz of a *MOTHER*, came to the Gentlewoman of the House where *Miadilla* lodg'd, and pretending to have a great Value for her, saying she had been her Customer formerly, and advis'd her to arrest the young Lady, otherwise she would never be paid a Penny of the Money she ow'd to her; but she was disappointed of her Aim. This Busy-Body made it her Business likewise to find out several People to whom *Miadilla* owed Sums of Money, and gave them the same Advice, but herein she lost her Labour also. I will not take upon me to say who it was that set this Wicked Woman to do the dirty Work, but it is not a very difficult Matter to guess from what Quarter she came, and who was the main Spring of the Machine.

The young Lady is now daily visited by the Count's Relations, who give her the Title of *LADY ONSLORID*, and acknowledge her to be their Relation; nay, she has been offer'd to be entertain'd and receiv'd into one of their Houses.

Whoever has read the CASE between the *Ld. FITZMAURICE* and *Mrs. ELIZABETH LEESON*, relating to their Wedding, and the Consummation of it afterwards in *TREASON*, will find it to be exactly parallel with this; and the VERDICT of the said said *Mrs. LEESON* against *Ld. FITZMAURICE* was adjudg'd to be void in the Court of *DUBLIN*; yet, on her Appeal to a Court of Delegates in *London*, it was found that *LEESON*

yet the VALIDITY of the CONTRACT was confirm'd on the fourteenth Day of *March*, 1732; which is no more than two Months and some Days since; and the other Part of the SENTENCE was,

That the said Ld. FITZ-MAURICE should marry the said ELIZABETH LEESON within a limited Time, or stand EXCOMMUNICATED; and further, That the said ELIZABETH LEESON should be paid Six Hundred Pounds per Annum by Way of ALIMONY.

What can the Count expect in his Favour from a Precedent so very recent? I may venture to say to him, as Major PALMES said to the before mentioned Lord FITZ MAURICE, by Way of Prediction,

By G—, my LORD, They will Marry You.

MUSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

F. I. N. T. S.

